

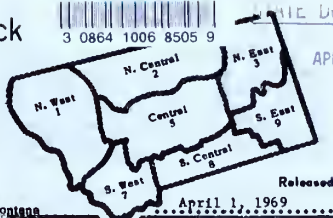
Montana Crop and Livestock Reporting Service

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Helene, Montana

SHEEP AND LAMB LOSSES IN MONTANA DURING 1968

DOLLAR LOSS NEARLY 2 MILLION BELOW 1967: Montana sheep raisers lost 303,000 head of sheep and lambs from all causes during 1968, according to the Montana Crop and Livestock Reporting Service. The value of these losses totaled \$5,631,500 compared with \$7,458,800 in 1967. Mild spring weather during lambing accounted for most of the reduced loss. Weather accounted for a \$1,045,400 loss during 1968 compared with \$3,169,300 in 1967. Most of the 1967 weather loss was caused by an early May storm. This storm caused excessive loss of newborn lambs, old sheep, and diseased sheep and lambs. The 1968 weather loss was only about one-third that of 1967. Disease loss amounted to \$770,800, an increase of 47 percent over the 1967 loss of \$523,400. Other important non-predator losses were poison plants, old age, 'on backs', lambing complications, theft, and malnutrition.

Predatory animal loss totaled 85,000 head compared with 61,400 in 1967, an increase of 38 percent. The \$1,511,500 loss in 1968 compares with \$1,017,500 during 1967. Coyotes again were the major predator causing the loss of 29,000 lambs and 6,600 sheep with a value of \$637,000. The comparable loss during 1967 was 25,500 sheep and lambs valued at \$438,300. Eagles, the next most active predator, accounted for the loss of 16,800 lambs and 300 sheep with a combined value of \$290,500. Other predators including fox, bear, bobcat, and dogs killed 27,100 sheep and lambs valued at \$502,200.

Unknown predators and unknown loss causes amounted to 40,600 head with a total combined value of \$741,400.

SOUTHWEST AND SOUTHEAST MONTANA LEAD IN PREDATOR LOSS: The percent of sheep and lambs lost to predators was highest in southwestern and southeastern Montana with losses of 25 and 21 percent respectively. Coyote losses were highest in the southwestern and central districts with 29 and 19 percent of the total loss. Eagle losses also were highest in these districts with 34 and 24 percent respectively.

NON-PREDATOR LOSSES HIGHEST IN SOUTHEASTERN AND CENTRAL DISTRICTS: Percentages of sheep and lambs lost to non-predator causes were highest in southeastern and central Montana, with 21 and 19 percent of the total. Weather loss was highest in the central, southwest, and southeastern districts. The central district reported the highest weather and disease loss.

METHODOLOGY AND DEFINITIONS: Sheep producers were stratified by the following size groups: 1-499 head, 500-2499 head, and 2500+ head. A probability non-response sample was drawn for each size group for estimating the non-response portion of the universe. Attempts were made to contact all

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sheep raisers in the largest size group.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's policy for official estimates of sheep and lamb losses is to include sheep losses for the entire year, but to include only those lamb losses that occur after docking. This special report includes an estimate of lambs lost prior to docking as well as those lost after docking.

COOPERATION: This study was undertaken at the request of the Montana Livestock Commission and the Montana Wool Growers Association. The Montana Livestock Commission contributed the required funds for the survey. The Montana Crop and Livestock Reporting Service conducted the survey and wishes to thank all cooperating sheep producers for their assistance.

MONTANA SHEEP AND LAMB LOSSES - 1967 and 1968

Cause of Loss	Number Of Head And Value By Causes					
	SHEEP LOSS		LAMB LOSS		TOTAL LOSS	
	Number : Head	Value 1/ Dollars	Number : Head	Value 2/ Dollars	Number : Head	Value Dollars
<u>Predators</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:
Coyote	6,600	147,200	29,000	489,800	35,600	637,000
Eagle	300	6,700	16,800	283,800	17,100	290,500
Fox 3/	500	11,100	8,300	140,200	8,800	151,300
Bear	1,900	42,400	5,300	89,700	7,200	131,900
Dog	2,800	62,500	3,300	55,700	6,100	118,200
Bobcat	500	11,100	5,300	89,500	5,800	100,600
<u>Unknown Predators</u>	1,400	31,200	3,000	50,700	4,400	81,900
<u>All Predators - 1968</u>	14,000	312,200	71,000	1,199,200	85,000	1,511,400
<u>All Predators - 1967</u>	11,900	278,500	49,500	739,000	61,400	1,017,500
<u>Other Causes</u>	:	:	:	:	:	:
Weather	7,500	167,200	52,000	878,300	59,500	1,045,500
Disease	12,600	281,000	29,000	489,800	41,600	770,800
Poison Plants	10,000	223,000	10,500	177,300	20,500	400,300
Old Age	15,000	334,500	---	---	15,000	334,500
'On Backs'	12,800	285,400	500	8,400	13,300	293,800
Lambing Complications	9,500	211,800	---	---	9,500	211,800
Theft	4,700	104,800	6,300	106,400	11,000	211,200
Malnutrition 4/	---	---	11,400	192,500	11,400	192,500
Flot 4/	500	11,200	500	8,400	1,000	19,600
Parasites 4/	200	4,500	500	8,400	700	12,900
<u>Unknown Causes</u>	8,200	182,900	26,300	444,200	34,500	627,100
<u>Total Other</u>	81,000	1,806,300	137,000	2,313,700	218,000	4,120,000
<u>Causes - 1968</u>	123,100	2,880,500	238,500	3,560,800	361,600	6,441,300
<u>Total All</u>	95,000	2,118,500	208,000	3,512,900	303,000	5,631,400
<u>Causes - 1967</u>	135,000	3,159,000	288,000	4,299,800	423,000	7,458,800

1/ Average reported value January 1, 1968. Value \$22.30 per head.

2/ Lamb value based on average mid-month prices received by farmers for all lambs marketed during September, October, and November 1968, converted to an average liveweight of 70 pounds. Value \$16.89 per head.

3/ Included in Unknown Predators in 1967.

4/ Included in Unknown Causes in 1967.

MONTANA SHEEP AND LAMB LOSSES, BY CAUSE AND SIZE OF FLOCK - 1968

Cause	Percent Of Sheep And Lambs By Causes By Size Of Flock			
	1-499	500-2499	2500 & Over	Total
----- Percent -----				
<u>Predators</u>				
Coyote	8	11	15	11
Eagle	3	4	7	5
Fox	4	3	2	3
Bear	1	2	4	2
Bobcat	1	3	2	2
Dog	5	1	2	3
Unknown Predators	*	*	*	*
<u>Total Predators</u>	22	24	32	26
<u>Other Causes</u>				
Weather	19	18	17	18
Disease	16	13	13	14
Poison Plants	4	10	9	8
Lambing Complications	4	5	4	4
'On Backs'	6	7	5	6
Old Age	10	6	3	6
Theft	5	6	1	4
Parasites	*	*	*	*
Bloat	1	*	*	1
Malnutrition	2	2	5	3
Unknown Causes	11	9	11	10
<u>Total Other Causes</u>	78	76	68	74
<u>Total All Causes</u>	100	100	100	100

* Less than .5 percent of all causes.

MONTANA SHEEP AND LAMB LOSSES, BY CAUSE AND SIZE OF FLOCK - 1968

Cause	Percent Of Sheep And Lambs By Size Of Flock By Causes			
	1-499	500-2499	2500 & Over	Total
----- Percent -----				
<u>Predators</u>				
Coyote	24	28	48	100
Eagle	21	25	54	100
Fox	44	34	22	100
Bear	12	26	62	100
Bobcat	13	41	46	100
Dog	60	14	26	100
Unknown Predators	34	14	52	100
<u>Total Predators</u>	27	27	46	100
<u>Other Causes</u>				
Weather	33	30	37	100
Disease	37	27	36	100
Poison Plants	17	39	44	100
Lambing Complications	28	37	35	100
'On Backs'	31	35	34	100
Old Age	54	29	17	100
Theft	41	49	10	100
Parasites	68	32	*	100
Bloat	97	3	*	100
Malnutrition	19	23	58	100
Unknown Causes	36	24	40	100
<u>Total Other Causes</u>	34	31	35	100
<u>Total All Causes</u>	32	30	38	100

* Less than .5 percent of all causes.

MONTANA SHEEP AND LAMB LOSSES - 1968

Cause	Percent By Causes By Crop Reporting Districts							
	N.	N.	N.	S.	S.	S.		
	West	Central	East	Central	West	Central	East	STATE
	Percent							
<u>Predators</u>								
Coyote	15	9	9	12	18	9	9	11
Eagle	1	2	5	6	5	2	8	5
Fox	1	*	7	1	2	1	6	3
Bear	3	2	*	4	6	2	*	2
Bobcat	*	*	2	1	3	1	3	2
Dog	9	5	2	1	2	4	*	3
Unknown Predators	*	*	*	*	*	1	*	*
<u>Total Predators</u>	29	18	25	25	36	20	26	26
<u>Other Causes</u>								
Weather	17	18	20	20	18	17	16	18
Disease	13	19	14	17	9	18	12	14
Poison Plants	5	6	9	8	7	6	10	8
Lambing Complications	3	3	2	3	5	5	5	4
"On Backs	3	6	7	5	4	6	8	6
Old Age	10	9	6	5	4	10	4	6
Theft	1	*	6	2	1	9	7	4
Parasites	*	*	*	*	*	1	*	*
Bloat	2	1	1	*	*	*	*	1
Malnutrition	4	9	2	1	4	1	4	3
Unknown Causes	13	11	8	14	12	7	8	10
<u>Total Other Causes</u>	71	82	75	75	64	80	74	74
<u>Total All Causes</u>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Less than .5 percent of all causes.

MONTANA SHEEP AND LAMB LOSSES - 1968

Cause	Percent By Crop Reporting Districts By Causes							
	N.	N.	N.	S.	S.	S.	S.	
	West	Central	East	Central	West	Central	East	STATE
	Percent							
<u>Predators</u>								
Coyote	6	7	13	19	29	10	16	100
Eagle	1	3	16	24	18	4	34	100
Fox	1	1	38	3	12	3	42	100
Bear	6	8	*	30	44	12	*	100
Bobcat	1	*	17	12	31	6	33	100
Dog	17	20	11	11	15	23	3	100
Unknown Predators	*	12	21	*	1	63	3	100
<u>Total Predators</u>	5	6	15	18	25	10	21	100
<u>Other Causes</u>								
Weather	4	9	18	21	18	12	18	100
Disease	4	13	17	22	11	16	17	100
Poison Plants	3	8	18	19	16	10	26	100
Lambing Complications	4	7	9	16	21	17	26	100
"On Backs"	2	10	19	16	11	13	29	100
Old Age	7	13	16	16	13	20	15	100
Theft	1	1	22	8	3	29	36	100
Parasites	8	*	*	3	11	68	10	100
Bloat	22	29	5	12	8	12	12	100
Malnutrition	5	26	12	7	20	5	25	100
Unknown Causes	5	10	12	25	22	9	17	100
<u>Total Other Causes</u>	4	10	16	19	16	14	21	100
<u>Total All Causes</u>	4	9	16	19	18	13	21	100

*Less than .5 percent of district total.

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